

5+6.

STUDENT SESSION: BREAKING DOWN A SCRIPT PTS. 1+2

CHAPTER REVIEW

"I think every scene has a goal...What am I doing in this scene for the story? Am I moving the story along to a certain place? Am I moving the story to a logical conclusion?"

—Samuel L. Jackson

To show you his characterization techniques in action, Sam workshops the diner scene from *Pulp Fiction* with a group of actors. He challenges the group to learn each character's lines so that everyone can act every part.

For Sam, every performance is rooted in a deep understanding of the text. He breaks down what the Ezekiel passage means to Jules at this moment in the film, and how Jules's history and personal psychology informs how he delivers that passage in this scene. He guides the actors as they work to understand Jules's goal in that scene and how it moves the entire story to a conclusion so that they can act with stronger intentions. He also reminds the actors of the moment before the scene, and what happened to him that day, which informs Jules's intention during the diner scene.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Knowing how to uncover your character's goal and the subtext of their lines is an integral skill you must develop as an actor. Check out [tips](#) on breaking down scenes to hone your own process.
- When an actor receives scene revisions on set, Sam says they are required to buckle down and learn the new material quickly. Practice [memorization techniques](#) to develop a process that works for you. Share what you learned with your classmates in [The Hub](#) and see if any of the processes they've developed work for you.

5+6.

STUDENT SESSION: BREAKING DOWN A SCRIPT PTS. 1+2

ASSIGNMENTS

- Using the character you selected in Chapter 2, start developing an understanding of their journey through the story. Does their goal remain constant throughout the script or does it change? Where in the script do these goals change and why? Is there one overarching goal (or “super objective”) that remains constant while each scene has its own set of goals? Do they get what they want?
- An important step in learning a monologue is to break down the subtext of the piece and make the words on the page your own. Select your character’s most compelling monologue and analyze it. What does this monologue mean in the greater context of the story? What’s at stake? Is there subtext? What aspects of the character’s personality and history inform how they deliver this monologue? What is the specific goal of this monologue? Who is the character talking to? Where are you? Be specific. Practice your monologue several times until it feels natural and embodied. Make sure it’s as memorized as possible, then film your performance and share it with your classmates in [The Hub](#).

$5+6.$

NOTES